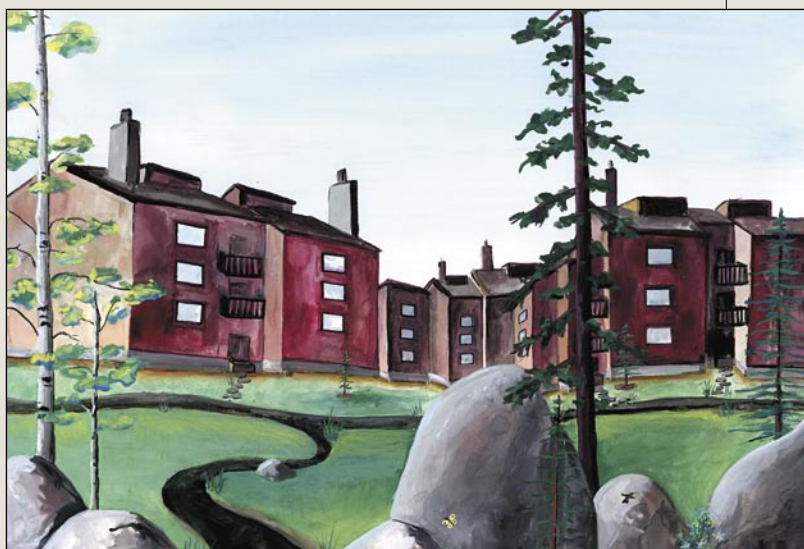


WILDLIFE FOR KIDS

Habitat! What's that?



TO PUT IT SIMPLY, Habitat is the Food, Water, Shelter and Space in an area that a wildlife species needs to survive. A species of wild animal can only live where its habitat needs can be found — where there is suitable food, water, shelter (cover) and space. These basic needs don't only have to be there, but also have to be available in the right amounts, in the right combinations and at the right time — they must be in a Suitable Arrangement. Habitat provides an animal with what it needs for feeding, resting, breeding, raising young and escaping danger. Some people think of habitat as an animal's "home."

Conditions within an environment don't always stay the same all the time though. This can make things more complicated. For example, natural succession, seasonal changes, or events such as a drought, flooding or a cold snap, can influ-

ence an animal's food and water supplies. Other wildlife may also limit an animal's ability to get to a needed resource — predators may stop an animal from reaching a food source too far from cover; competitors may make it too hard for an animal to find a good nest site; or disturbance from noise or presence of people may scare it off and keep it from being able to use the resources in an area.

Besides all the possible changes in an environment, an animal itself also changes over time. Its needs can change with the seasons or as it grows and gets older during its life. Migration, hibernation and reproduction are other activities in the life of an animal that can change its habitat needs for survival.

Habitat galore— maybe not anymore

Utah is lucky to have many different environments — forests,

wetlands, mountains, foothills and deserts. These environments provide habitat for more than 600 species of wildlife (not counting all the insects, spiders and other smaller forms of life).

Unfortunately, loss of habitat has become the biggest threat to wildlife in Utah. Most of this loss of habitat has been caused by things people have done. Much wildlife habitat has been changed into housing developments, businesses and farms, and for production of energy, wood and minerals. Pollution, the spread of exotic species, soil erosion and over-grazing have also caused much damage to wildlife habitat. It is true that some species can live close to humans and deal with activities of people, but most cannot. When habitat is lost or destroyed in an area, most wildlife species can no longer survive there. Two areas in Utah where wildlife habitat is especially

UTAH'S WILD NOTEBOOK

threatened are sagebrush-steppe and riparian ecosystems.

Keeping Utah wild!

A lot of people in Utah think the "wild" areas of our state are very important and make living here better. Wild areas with wildlife are not only beautiful places for people to enjoy. They also help do important things for people. For example, they

give us sources of clean water and clean air, things that people could not survive without. To be sure we have good habitat left for wildlife, people need to take better care of the land. Since healthy wildlife habitat is not only good for wildlife but people too, helping to preserve habitat is good for everyone.

People can still make a difference. How you choose to use

resources and treat the land can make a difference too. To help save habitat for wildlife, you can get involved in organizations that work to protect habitat and the environment. Or you can even create or help restore wildlife habitat right around your school, home or in your community.

Remember, wildlife needs habitat! 🐾



Barn owls



Great Basin rattlesnake



Bobcat



Tiger salamander

Habitat: what wildlife needs

Exercise

Pictured here are some of Utah's wild animals. Try to match the animal's picture with its description. Then write the animal's name in the white space above its description.

Learn more about these animals on the Internet at the Utah Conservation Data Center: dwrcdc.nr.utah.gov/ucdc/.

And the next time you're in the outdoors, look around and think about which animals could find habitat to live where you are.

- feeds on twigs and branches of trees and woody bushes, and can bite through branches more than an inch thick;
- has a thick winter coat with woolly underfur, and a thin summer coat;
- grows huge antlers each spring that it sheds during winter;
- stands up to 7.5 feet tall when full grown.

- lives part of its life in a pond, then moves to land near water;
- has moist, scaleless skin and four toes on its front feet and five on its back;
- is the only species of salamander living in Utah;
- makes no sounds.

HABITAT IS

wh



UTAH'S WILD NOTEBOOK

- eats cottontail rabbits and other small mammals;
- might rest during the day on a rocky ledge or in a hollow log;
- has fur that helps it blend in well with its surroundings;
- has young that are called "kittens."

- hunts over fields and meadows at night in search of mice;
- has large eyes, but can find prey in total darkness using its ears;
- roosts in old buildings, caves or tree hollows during the day;
- spends winter here instead of migrating south."

- lives in rough, rocky and steep desert canyons and washes;
- feeds on grasses and shrubs, and drinks from water holes;
- has hooves that can grip onto rocks as it climbs;
- can spot predators up to five miles away.



Yellow crab spider



Desert bighorn sheep



Beaver



Moose

- does not spin webs, but can change its color to hide as it waits to ambush prey such as bees, flies and other insects;
- has fangs to inject venom into its prey;
- can lay between 50 to 100 eggs;
- has eight eyes;

- lives in ponds created by the dams that it builds;
- has large front teeth to cut down trees and feed on bark;
- slaps its paddle-shaped tail on the water to signal danger;
- stays active during the winter inside its lodge.

- has no eardrums but can feel vibrations with its body;
- can "smell" and sense heat with its forked tongue to find prey such as mice, frogs and lizards;
- hunts at night and rests in a cool burrow during the day;
- swallows its prey whole.

here it's at.

UTAH'S WILD NOTEBOOK

FOOD: Food provides energy and strength animals need to be healthy, stay warm and grow. The types and amount of food an animal needs can depend on its location, age, size, gender, behavior, and from season to season. Animals spend most of their time searching for food.

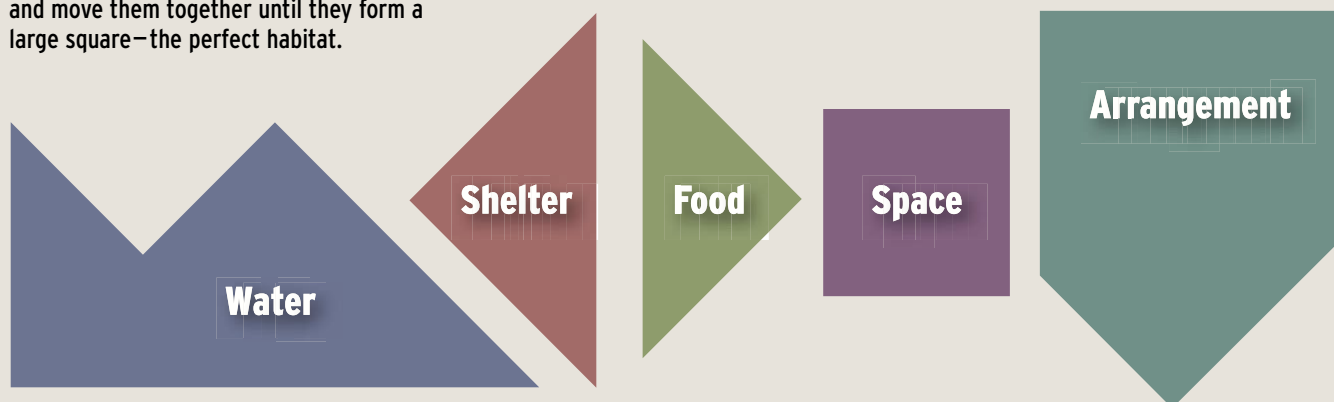
SHELTER or COVER: Shelter or cover has many purposes. It serves as a place to: feed, play and loaf, raise and care for young, be protected from bad weather, rest and sleep, and escape from predators. Shelter can be many things—a thicket, a pile of rocks, an underground burrow, dense trees, tall grasses and even water.

SPACE: All wildlife species need specific amounts of space. The area an animal normally travels to get its needs is called its home range. Within a species, home range size can vary depending on factors that influence the quality of habitat in an area. Almost all animals also show some type of territorial behavior where they defend a particular area against intruders.

WATER: Water is a crucial requirement. The bodies of most animals consist of 60–80 percent water. Water helps to regulate body temperature, carry nutrients, eliminate waste and maintain shape. Sources of fresh water include lakes, rivers, springs, seeps, snow, dew and puddles from rain.

Habitat puzzle

Each of these five shapes represents one part of a perfect wildlife habitat for wildlife. A perfect habitat has food, water shelter and space in the proper arrangement. First, cut out the shapes. Then turn and move them together until they form a large square—the perfect habitat.



WILD about reading: books for learning more

Once there was a Tree, by Natalie Romanova, Dial Books for Young Readers, 1989.

Lizard's Song, by George Shannon, William Morrow & Company Inc., 1992.

The Salamander Room, by Anne Mazer, Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 1991.

Animal Houses, by Aileen Fisher, Bowmar, 1973.

And So They Build, by Bert Kitchen, Candlewick Press, 1993.

Fitting In: Animals in their Habitats, by Gilda Berger and Melvin Berger, Coward-McCann-Putnam, 1976.

The Old Boot by Chris Baines, Interlink Publishing Group, Inc., 1990.

The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest, by Lynne Cherry, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1990.

Crinkleroot's Guide to Knowing Animal Habitats, by Jim Arnosky, Simon & Schuster Children's Books, 1997.

The Empty Lot, by Dale Fife, Sierra Club Books for Children, 1996.

Where Once There Was a Wood, by Denise Fleming, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1996.

Getting WILD!

Utah's WILD Notebook is produced by Utah's Project WILD program. (Note, this publication is now replacing Project WILD's *Growing WILD / Nature's Call* publication.) WILD workshops, offered by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, provide teachers and other educators with opportunities for professional development and a wealth of wildlife education activities and materials for helping students learn about wildlife and its conservation. For a current listing of Project WILD educator workshops, visit the Project WILD Web site at wildlife.utah.gov/projectwild/ or send e-mail to DianaVos@utah.gov.

It's WILD!

Project WILD activities for teachers and students that correlate to this topic include:

- Habitat Lap Sit
- Classroom Carrying Capacity
- Everybody Needs a Home
- Shrinking Habitat
- Habitat Rummy
- Dragonfly Pond
- What's That, Habitat?

- Improving Wildlife Habitat Habitat in the Community

WILD educator resources and happenings

(Available for Project WILD-trained educators only.)

- Habitat Earth: Wildlife—Video and educator activity guide for check-out. Conveys how FOOD, WATER, SHELTER and SPACE are the essential components of habitat, and that each species has specific habitat requirements. 26 minutes Grades 3–7.
- Project WILD Schoolyard NatureScaping Grants—Receive \$500 for students to conduct an action project to establish wildlife habitat on or near their school grounds. Application and details online at Project WILD Web site.
- WILD About ELK—Advanced Project WILD Educator Training, June 18–19, 2004. Details and registration form are on the Project WILD Web site.

